

Importance of Museum Activities in Heritage Promotion and Visitor Attraction

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Abstract

The museum is both an educational and a recreational space. It is concerned with collecting antiquities, their studies, and their presentations to the public in a way that satisfies curiosity and responds to questions about people's lives and the tools they once used. However, the museum's mission does not end there; it must rely on new approaches and methods. Through this research, we have sought to highlight these cultural institutions, their activities, and their role in our society. The issue of tourist attractions and the reinforcement of the idea of visiting museums remain some of the most pressing concerns that must be addressed.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Digital Dissemination, Museum Activities, Tourism Promotion, Visitor Engagement

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Introduction:

The museum is regarded as a living memory of the nation, as it houses archaeological remains dating back to various historical periods, bearing witness to the past and successive civilisations. From the dawn of humanity to the present day, it also contains artistic masterpieces that embody human creativity and the development achieved across diverse areas of life. Historically, museums have focused primarily their policies on acquisition and exhibition rather than revenue generation. In the contemporary era, however, faced with new challenges, museums have begun to reflect on ways and means to increase their income and contribute to national revenue.

The central question arising from this context is as follows:

✚ What are the activities of museums, and what role do they play in society?

Before analysing this issue, it is essential to revisit the history of these cultural institutions and their activities while also proposing specific ideas that may offer the museum renewed vitality.

1. Definition of the Museum:

A museum is a space designed to house artistic or archaeological objects for various purposes: to preserve, protect, study, or exhibit them to the public. Therefore, the museum may represent people's collective memory through its collections. It contains items dating back to different historical periods, serving as evidence of human existence on Earth, the way of life adopted by societies, and the stages of development. The term "museum" is closely tied to the Greek word *mouseion* in foreign languages.² In English, German, Spanish and Italian, it appears as a museum. The Greek origin of the word refers to the Muses of the Nine Arts.³ Sisters responsible for overseeing the nine⁴ Artistic disciplines are illustrated in the following table:

TABLE.1

The Nine Greek Muses of the Arts

² *Encyclopaedia*, "Dossier on Heritage," *Larousse*, March 9, 2024, <https://www.larousse.fr/>.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Ezzat Zaki Hamed Qaddous, *The Science of Excavations and the Art of Museums* (Alexandria, Egypt: Al-Hadari Press, 2003), 287.

Name	Type of Art She Represents
Calliope	Goddess of poetry and epic tales
Clio (Kleio)	Goddess of history
Euterpe	Goddess of flute playing
Melpomene (Malpomene)	Goddess of tragedy
Terpsichore	Goddess of dance and folklore
Erato	Goddess of lyric poetry and the art of playing the lyre
Polyhymnia	Goddess of sacred hymns
Urania	Goddess of astronomy
Thalia	Goddess of Comedy

Source: Ezzat Zaki Hamed Qaddous, 'Ilm al-ḥafā'ir wa-fann al-matāḥif (The Science of Excavations and the Art of Museums), p. 287.

With the developments observed in museums throughout the past, the concept has gradually expanded to convey its intended meaning more fully. In this context, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) defines a museum as follows:

"A museum is a permanent, nonprofit institution in the service of society and its development. It is open to the public and allows research to be conducted on the tangible evidence of humanity and its environment. It acquires, conserves, and communicates the results of this research. It also exhibits such evidence for purposes of study, education, and enjoyment."⁵

2. Types of Museums

Algeria is home to a wide array of museum institutions. Some are housed in historic buildings considered part of the nation's cultural heritage, such as palaces and archaeological or historical monuments. In contrast, others are located in newly constructed facilities that house museum collections. Museums can be categorised into two principal types based on their architectural structure and the nature of their exhibitions:

⁵ Alberto Garlandini, "Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM," *ICOM*, March 11, 2024, <https://icom.museum/fr/>.

2.1. Museum Architecture

- Museums established within historical and archaeological buildings

Figure 1: National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Arts



Most Algerian museums are located within historical or archaeological monuments, particularly those situated in Algiers;⁶ Moreover, they are distinguished by the following characteristics:

- These buildings provide a historical atmosphere that transports the visitor into the past, allowing historical exhibits to be displayed in an environment that reflects their original context. An example is the National Public Museum of Ahmed Bey in Constantine. Similarly, many national museums were originally administrative centers or summer residences⁷ for monarchs during the Ottoman period.

- These museums are often dedicated to the exhibition of ethnographic objects representing the daily life of various regions across the country. For example, exhibition halls may bear the names of Algerian regions, within which artefacts are displayed in scenes that reconstruct the everyday lives of the inhabitants of those areas.

- The use of such buildings contributes to their preservation, protection, and long-term sustainability. It also enhances its reputation and attracts local and foreign visitors eager to discover Algeria's cultural heritage. The museum visit thus becomes a starting point that awakens in the visitor a desire to explore the nation's heritage

⁶ Ferdi Sabah, "Museums of Algeria: Ambiguous Perception of a Pluralist Past," in *Algeria 50 Years Later: State of Knowledge in Social and Human Sciences*, symposium proceedings, CRASC, Oran, 2004, 205.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

further.

- It becomes an incentive to explore and travel across the country to satisfy one's curiosity and understand the national heritage within its original environment by visiting different regions and observing the distinct ways of life specific to each.

- It fosters cultural sensibility and evokes diverse memories linked to historical structures. Historical and archaeological monuments are considered part of today's cultural and historical heritage. They recount the achievements of those who lived during past eras, their creativity in constructing and designing such buildings, their architectural skills, and how these monuments were adapted to suit their lifestyles and daily needs. Each architectural element or corner holds meanings that reflect how individuals adapt to their environment and society.⁸ For example, in monuments from the Islamic period, spaces may be designated for men and others for women, as well as separate corridors for servants and household members.

Numerous challenges are related to the exhibition and storage of museum collections in historical buildings. The curator often finds himself caught between the dual concern of preserving both the building and the collection:

- Compliance with the general conditions of the building, without the possibility of making any modifications.

- Inability to implement modern museological methods within old structures, particularly concerning lighting, security alarms, and exhibition standards.

- Difficulty in creating new access points within buildings to facilitate visitor flow through historical quarters.

- Constraints in expanding the structure as exhibitions within the museum continue to grow.⁹

- Providing necessary building services, such as maintenance, cleaning, and the installation of audiovisual equipment, presents challenges.

Modern museum buildings

Figure 2: National Public Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Algiers

⁸ Georges Henri Rivière, "On the Integration of a Museum into a Historical Monument," *Museum*, 1980, 104.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.



The following features characterise it:

- All necessary infrastructure should be provided, including lighting, air conditioning, guidance systems, parking areas, and gardens.
- Freedom to select an appropriate location for the construction of the building, along with the possibility of future expansion by adding new wings.
- These buildings are particularly well suited to modern art museums and those that display significant antiquities.¹⁰ These include mosaics, statues, and similar artefacts. However, they require specific efforts to be appropriately adapted for the exhibition of archaeological and historical discoveries and collections.

2.2. Museum Classification According to Exhibition Type:

-Historical Museums:

Figure 3: National Public Museum of Art and History of Tlemcen

¹⁰ Bertrand Delanoé, *Summary Report on the Museum of Modern Art*, R.O.C. – Audit of the Museum of Modern Art, City Hall of Paris, 2008.



These institutions preserve, restore, exhibit, and present collections of historical value. Examples include museums of the Moudjahidine, archaeological museums, site museums located at archaeological discoveries, reserve collections preserving artefacts in situ, and natural history museums.

Art Museums:

Figure 4: National Public Museum of Fine Arts, Algiers



Dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of works of art, as well as the organisation of meetings and temporary exhibitions of paintings and various artistic themes. These include museums of modern art and other art institutions where various paintings and artistic sculptures are displayed.

Scientific and Educational Museums: Also known as educational museums, these museums help children develop cultural awareness and learn about the history of their ancestors. They include

museums of media, literature, music, pedagogy, and science, as well as museums dedicated to documents and postage stamps.

- Maritime Museums include marine media museums and the National Public Maritime Museum.
- Military Museums include the National Army Museum and the Police Museum.

Ethnographic Museums: Numerous examples exist, including the National Public Museum of the Bardo, the Palace of Ahmed Bey in Constantine, and others that focus on displaying ethnographic objects, often presented as scenes from daily life.

3. Museum Activities

3.1. Acquisition, Inventory, and Conservation of Collection Objects

Museums may acquire works of art in several ways, including donations, purchases, and deposits.¹¹ Inventorying is one of the most crucial legal procedures for preserving antiquities. Each item is assigned a unique inventory number and is accompanied by a card that includes all relevant data and information about the object, along with a photograph. This statistical process aims to protect tangible cultural heritage from loss and to facilitate its retrieval within storage facilities or exhibition halls. It is a structured task carried out by the museum's scientific team under the supervision of the chief curator. To streamline this procedure, a technical sheet is prepared for every object entering the institution, containing all the essential information about the item.

3.2. Exhibitions

Once the museum has collected, inventoried, and studied its objects, it must exhibit them after selecting the items that fall within its area of specialisation. To exhibit means to choose something, make it visible, and display it for a specific purpose. The museum exhibition is considered the institution's façade; if the display method is effective, the museum will attract a broad audience. Conversely, a poorly curated display may deter visitors. The public seeks both comfort and knowledge and is eager to engage with heritage and the relics that accompany it through time. Visitors wish to

¹¹ International Council of Museums (ICOM). *Museum Definition*. 2019. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards/museum-definition/>.

understand how ancient humans spent their time, earned their living, the various tools they used from prehistory onwards, and how those tools evolved across historical periods (Oline, 2022).¹²

Museum exhibitions can be divided into four sections:

- Permanent display
- Temporary exhibitions
- Travelling exhibitions or museum portfolios
- Online displays on websites and social media pages

The permanent exhibition reflects the museum's specialisation, even when this specialisation pertains to Islamic antiquities. The exhibition includes all artefacts drawn from various museum collections, such as utensils, garments, tools, and devices crafted and used by humans during that era. It is termed "permanent" because it remains unchanged; the objects on display are not moved unless signs of deterioration or damage appear.

– Temporary Exhibitions: Museum organisers curate temporary exhibitions to allow the public to view new additions to the museum's collection. These are structured around themes planned and studied by the scientific team and brought to life as a temporary exhibition for a specific duration. This type of exhibition is prevalent during Heritage Month, where it is organised and arranged according to the occasion's theme. One of the benefits of such exhibitions is that they necessitate the renewal of displayed items, which may later be integrated into the permanent collection or remain on display for extended periods. The primary objective of a temporary exhibition is to convey information quickly rather than through the leisurely and contemplative experience characteristic of permanent exhibitions.

– Travelling Exhibitions, or What Is Referred to as the Museum Portfolio:

¹² (Oline 2022)

These exhibitions encompass a variety of subjects related to the museum's area of specialisation and are presented through display panels bearing texts and images. They are exhibited outside the museum in educational settings such as schools and scientific institutions such as universities, other museums, festivals, and venues.

Technological advancement and the multiplicity of research and social communication media play a significant role in raising awareness and disseminating cultural heritage through the various methods they offer for tourism promotion. Among the positive aspects of these digital platforms and social communication spaces are as follows:

- Saving time and money.
- Arousing the desire to travel and observe the masterpiece close, thereby increasing museum visitor numbers.
- Presenting our country's cultural and national heritage at both the global and national levels.
- Providing greater access to information about antiquities and museum collections.
- Increasing institutional revenue by increasing the number of followers and subscribers.
- Promoting culture, fostering a sense of patriotism, and strengthening citizens' interest and attachment to the customs and traditions of their society.
- Discovering the customs and traditions of other societies.
- Learning from the experiences of other museum institutions.
- Facilitating communication between different cultural institutions, fostering cooperation, and collaborating on projects that increase revenue.

3.3. Scientific Research

The museum organises numerous conferences on specific subjects, particularly those related to cultural heritage and methods for its preservation. It also delivers lectures on various occasions and at national forums. Such scientific activities may contribute to increased museum revenues by charging participation fees to attendees and speakers in exchange for certificates and the publication of their research. This falls within the scope of scientific tourism.

3.4. Organisation of Symposia and Study Days

Most national museums organise workshops for young audiences, students, and researchers across various disciplines, such as drawing, singing, ancient scripts, tattooing, pottery-making, and embroidery. These activities can increase a museum's revenue through service fees, supporting its financial sustainability.

3.5. Workshops

Publishing is considered one of the key outcomes of research. In this context, the museum publishes all research findings in journals. Additionally, it produces brochures to present the museum and its artefacts, thereby enabling visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the institution.

All exhibitions require informative catalogues, display object identification sheets, and explanatory texts to facilitate visitor comprehension.

To increase financial revenues, the museum may also prepare souvenir cards featuring photographs of antiquities accompanied by basic information—items frequently requested by visitors during guided museum tours.

3.6. Publication

Publishing is regarded as one of the principal outcomes of research. In this field, the museum publishes all research findings in academic journals. It also produces brochures to present the museum and its artefacts, providing visitors with a better understanding of the institution.

All exhibitions require a rich information catalogue, display item identification sheets, and explanatory texts to aid visitor comprehension and enhance financial revenues.

In addition, souvenir cards featuring photographs of antiquities and essential information are typically prepared, and visitors often request these during guided museum tours.

3.7. Tourist Guiding

A non-specialist visitor with limited knowledge of museums cannot undertake a visit alone; instead, such a person requires someone to guide and accompany them throughout the tour. For this reason, our museums employ tour guides who provide explanations and accompany visitors during their museum experience. This task is carried out by trained professionals specialising in the field through vocational training centres. Their services generate revenue for the museum.

It is essential to invest in such roles owing to the significant value that specialists in this area bring to the tourist experience. This will ensure the psychological comfort of visitors and provide them with all the essential information regarding antiquities, exhibitions, and the building itself.

4. Contribution of various sectors to the promotion of Museums and tourism

4.1. The Role of Media in Advertising and Cultural and Tourism Promotion

The media serve as a vital link between society and the museum, playing a key role in raising awareness of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, by presenting it in a positive light and highlighting its value to current and future generations. This is achieved by using all forms of media and participating in or launching cultural programs that help enhance cultural consciousness within society. Media coverage of the museum's various programs—including study days, exhibitions, forums, etc., generates enthusiasm for museum visits, particularly workshops and the full range of museum activities.

4.2. The Role of Handicrafts and Traditional Industries

Traditional industries and ancient crafts reflect the interaction between humans and their local environment and represent one of the fundamental pillars of the economic fabric. They share a close relationship with museums, particularly those specialising in folk arts, popular traditions, and ethnography.

This connection stems from traditional craftsmanship explanations and solutions regarding how antiquities and displayed objects were initially produced and their contributions to the restoration and preservation of heritage items.

These crafts and traditional industries can also serve as sources of revenue for museums by allocating dedicated pavilions for the exhibition and sale of traditional products and by organising workshops and training sessions under the supervision of skilled artisans across various domains.

Conclusion

Museums of all types and specialisations serve as a bridge between the past and the present. Our responsibility is to preserve this heritage from disappearance and transmit it in the best possible manner to future generations. The presence of museums effectively contributes to tourism development, as they represent a key means of attracting visitors. Various museums pursue numerous important objectives in service to individuals and society. They are entrusted with safeguarding historical and cultural heritage, as well as the creative legacy of our ancestors, by collecting and acquiring artefacts, materials, and archaeological and historical documents. Their responsibilities include registering, photographing, cleaning, conserving, and restoring these items as needed. It will be restored and exhibited in a manner that is visually appealing and engaging for visitors. Museums also strive to support and promote research, excavations, and systematic scientific investigations of antiquities with the assistance of local and international scientists, specialists, and experts. The museum's mission does not end with these responsibilities; it must rely on new methods and strategies to increase its revenues. Through this study, we have attempted to present the most significant suggestions that could enhance the museum's financial sustainability. The challenge of attracting tourists and reinforcing the concept of museum visitation remains one of the most pressing issues to be addressed. Despite all efforts by the state to instil such ideas within society, museums continue to suffer from these difficulties. To overcome this situation, it is necessary to restructure museums by enacting laws that support their functions and contribute to their financial growth. This effort must involve all sectors connected to heritage.

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